

March 17, 1955

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U.S. Gambles That Khrushchev Is Bluffing on Berlin

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WASHINGTON — With the Berlin crisis acute and talk of nuclear war in the air, one of America's top intelligence officials has given an opinion which goes a long way to explain why President Eisenhower asks the nation not to be hysterical.

It is a fair assumption that the opinion given represents a majority view of the President's advisers.

This view is that the Soviet Union is not prepared to bring on a nuclear war and wants a 15-year period of peace for the development of its economic, military and political strength.

THE ANALYSIS was submitted to a university group in Columbia, S. C., by Robert Amory, Jr., deputy director for intelligence of the central intelligence agency, (CIA) and one of director Allen W. Dulles' chief assistants.

Amory's speech was reported locally in Columbia, but received little attention elsewhere, much to the surprise of top officials of the CIA. Amory is also a member of the planning board of the national security council, headed by the President. The speech was Amory's first on-the-record talk in four years.

Amory said the Soviets "haven't got what it takes rationally to challenge us this spring." According to Amory, Premier Nikita Khrushchev is not ready to risk a nuclear

war over Berlin, but "expects to force us to chicken out."

A year and half ago Amory said, a conclusion was reached in the Soviet Union that a 15-year period without major hostilities was imperative to the nation's growth.

AT PRESENT, he said, the Soviet economy is not mobilized for war or preparing for war, but is being built up vertically without an attempt to broaden the base.

"If the West is resolute," Amory was quoted, "then I believe that the Soviet Union, by hook or crook, will be the ones to back down."

Amory conceded the possibility that circumstances might force Russia to go to war, though she is not ready to take the first step.

But his emphasis was on the 15-year period now running its course. He thought the Russians seek a rate of growth to produce an annual gross national product of 500 billion dollars — greater than the present United States level — and consumer standards compared to western Europe, with 100 billion to spend annually on armaments and external investments.

"WE FACE a race for leadership in the world against militant Communists with fervant faith," Amory said.

Perhaps by coincidence, Amory's speech was delivered on Mar. 4, the same day Mr. Eisenhower told a press conference.

"I don't think we ought to be thinking all the time, every minute, that while we

are sitting here, we are going to — we are very apt to get a bombing attack on Washington. The reason we have very great and expensive intelligence forces is to keep us informed as well as they possibly can, so, I don't believe we ought to be arguing points of this kind too much, because I believe we create more misapprehension than we do understanding."

Mr. Eisenhower's statement suggested that he has accepted the kind of intelligence evaluation outlined by Amory.

IF THIS IS the case, Mr. Eisenhower's statements last week that nuclear war is not an impossibility seems less portentous than at first seemed to be the case.

The emphasis would be more strongly on his added statement that he could not see how anyone would be "senseless" enough to bring on a nuclear war, since neither side could win.

It is noted here that the President does not command the incisiveness and clarity of Secretary of State Dulles in the cold war debate, though apparently he has felt the need to be national spokesman during Dulles' illness.